

# Yoga

## Spirit & Strength



## Pregnancy Worksheets



Mobile : 07985 581888

Email [ysas@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ysas@hotmail.co.uk)



[www.yogaspiritandstrength.co.uk](http://www.yogaspiritandstrength.co.uk)

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### To Begin: Centering the self using the breath (5 - 10 mins)

- Check you are sitting comfortably with good posture.
- To work good posture check you are lifting through your spine & through the crown of your head - feel yourself growing taller.
- Check your chin is in a fraction and your shoulders are low and wide & relaxed.
- Have your arms & hands in a comfortable & relaxed position so perhaps resting in your lap with your fingers interlaced or with your palms down on your thighs. (*See sheet on different hand madras and try them out to see what you like*)
- Then try and close your eyes & imagine you are shutting out the daily world and all its concerns - you are dedicating this time just to yourself.
- Now begin to breath slowly, smoothly and deeply. Try to breathe through your nose if you comfortably can for this warms and filters the air. Perhaps you can bring your awareness to the tip of your nose and focus your mind on your breath. Notice the coolness of the air as it enters your nostrils and the warmth of the air as it leaves. *When we concentrate on our breathing it helps to calm and centre the mind and emotions and helps to relax both body and mind.*
- Now as you continue to breath slowly and deeply begin to draw you awareness inwards, so it feels as though there is just you in the room and imagine you are safe and secure with no worries or concerns. However if worries should enter your mind try and breath them away with each exhalation....imagine you are letting go of them with each out breath.
- If you find it hard to switch your mind off and relax into your breathing then try and count the breath, so as you inhale count to 2 or 3 in your mind and as you exhale count to 2 or 3 again. *This really helps to focus a wondering mind for it's almost near impossible to count the breath and worry or think about other things at the same time.*
- Now move your awareness further in and all the way down to your abdomen - the centre of your being known as the Hara. Now as you inhale filling your lungs with healing, vibrant energy feel your abdomen - your Hara expand, then as you exhale emptying your lungs of stale air feel your abdomen - your Hara sinking back. So keep breathing in this way now focusing on the rise and fall of your abdomen - working abdominal breaths in your own time.
- Now as you continue working your abdominal breaths try and visualise or imagine drawing in that positive, healing, vibrant energy known as Prana with each inhalation and visualise it spreading through body and mind. Then with each exhalation visualise or feel any tension, tiredness or negativity just draining away. So continue breathing this way working this visualisation in your own time.
- When you feel ready let go of your breath meditation and return to natural breathing which you should now find to be slower and deeper than before.

#### Note

You can do this from lying in Baby Krishna (*see worksheet on how to practise*)

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Hand Positions - Mudras

#### **Meanings**

These hand positions are used during meditation to help focus the mind. Each one is slightly different and said to subtly affect the patterns of the conscience mind if practised. Obviously they have not been proven to work, but through practising them you will end up focusing your mind on their meaning which could prove to be very helpful in your meditation. Have fun and see what happens!

#### **Positive Mind Mudra**

Right hand on top of the left, palms up, resting in your lap. This symbolises the power of positive energy in thought form. So as you practise this mudra focus on nurturing a positive frame of mind.

#### **Empty Mind Mudra**

Left hand on top of the right, palms up, resting in your lap. This symbolises the empty mind so when practising focus on being free of thoughts.

#### **Mudra of Self Acceptance**

Fingers interlaced, palms up, resting in your lap. This symbolises the joining of the sun and moon energies and the acceptance of positive and negative. As you work this mudra focus on accepting your whole self - both your male and female, positive and negative qualities.

#### **Healing Hands Mudra**

Hands palm down resting on each thigh or knee. This symbolises the energy of the physical being, so as you practise this mudra visualise your body healthy and energised.

#### **Jhana Mudra**

Backs of the hands resting on the legs with the thumb and first finger meeting with the other three fingers extended. This symbolises the unity of the universal energy (thumb) with the individual energy (first finger). The other three fingers represent the qualities of the material world (Sattvic - balanced, Rajasic - fast/speedy and Tamasic - slow & depressive). As you practise this mudra focus your awareness on the unity of yourself with the universe and separate yourself from the everyday world.

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Breathing - Pranayama (5 - 10 mins)

#### **Benefits**

Working with the breath is one of the most important things in Hatha Yoga practise, but it can take a while to get used to. They say “the secret is in the breath” and that “those who half breathe only half live” and when you learn to work with the breath you will see and feel what they mean.

Obviously we are breathing all the time and it requires no thought at all, but when we do this we often only shallow breath so only use a fraction of our lungs. This means we do not work our lungs fully, we do not release all the stale air gathered in the lungs and we deny our bodies of lots of oxygen or healing energy known as Prana. Our bodies organs, muscles and brain need lots of oxygen in order to function properly and by learning to work abdominal and full lung breaths we help to achieve this. We also help to improve our lung capacity and strengthen our lungs and intercostal muscles. It's therefore very beneficial for those who suffer with respiratory complaints like asthma.

When you learn to breathe fully and bring more oxygen and Prana in to the body you'll find you'll feel more energised and strong. Often when you begin to work with the breath you can feel a little dizzy as the body is not used to that extra oxygen so it's important to go with care. Often you can only work a small count of the breath anyway as the lungs are not used to being used so fully. However with time and practise you will find you can work a longer, deeper breath and you will wonder how you ever managed breathing so little before.

The other benefits of working with the breath are that it helps to slow the body and mind down and in turn helps to calm any highly charged emotions. In Yoga they say that if you can learn to control the breath you can control your thoughts, emotions and actions and to a certain extent it's true. One of the best ways of calming the mind and emotions is to count the inhalation and exhalation as this helps to focus the mind and stop it wandering or getting bored. However if you find this is not a problem for you then you may like to work some of the other breathing exercises, which have added benefits and visualisations to help with healing both body and mind.

It is advised that you only work one of these exercises at a time as Pranayama is very powerful and may make you feel ill if you practised it for too long. If you come over dizzy whilst practising then stop and rest just as you would with your asana - posture practise and return to natural breathing again.

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Full Lung Breathing

This is one of the best Pranayama techniques for it teaches you how to use your lungs properly and is therefore a good one to learn first. In this exercise you learn how to fill your lungs from bottom to top working up in stages. To begin with you may find you cannot inhale for very long and may find it difficult to work a full lung breath. However with time and practise you're lungs will strengthen & you'll soon be able to, so don't give up!

This exercise is best practised from lying in Savasana - Relaxation Pose as it enables you to work your lungs more easily, but if that is not suitable for you then you can practise from sitting. Try and breath through your nose and make your breath as slow and controlled as possible. So exhale emptying your lungs ready to begin.

- Inhale all the way down to your lower lungs, feeling your abdomen expand & then slowly exhale from your lower lungs feeling your abdomen sinking back (practise 5 times).
- Inhale all the way down to your lower lungs, feeling your abdomen expand and then up in to your middle lungs feeling your rib cage expand. Then slowly exhale from your lower lungs first, feeling your abdomen relax and then from your middle lungs feeling your rib cage relax (practise 5 times).
- Inhale down to your lower lungs, feeling abdomen expand, then up in to your middle lungs feeling your rib cage expand and then up in to your upper lungs feeling your collar bone lift. Then exhale from the lower lungs, then the middle lungs and then the upper lungs (practise 5 times).

Return to natural breathing when finished and feel how much deeper and steadier your natural breathing is. Feel your body and mind filled with Prana - life force, healing energy.

### Rhythmic Breathing

This can be worked from sitting or lying down on your back which ever works best for you. Remember not to lay in Savasana after the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy, practise from sitting instead. Either way get yourself comfy and try and breathe deeply through your nose if you can with your eyes closed. Only work the count that's right for you so don't work a high count of 5 if you find yourself struggling with the breath, stay with a lesser count and work from there. So exhale emptying your lungs ready to begin.

- Inhale for a slow count of 3 and exhale to a slow count of 3 (practise 5 times).
- Inhale for a slow count of 4, and exhale to a slow count of 4 (practise 5 times).
- Inhale for a slow count of 5, and exhale to a slow count of 5 (practise 5 times).

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Energising Breaths

This needs to be worked from sitting, so check you are comfortable and are lifting through your spine with your shoulders low and wide and head centered. Try and have your eyes closed to aid with concentration and to help focus within.

- Bring your hands in to your lap on level with your navel with your palms up, and have the fingertips pointing towards each other but not quite touching.
- As you slowly inhale raise your hands up to chest or shoulder height.
- Hold the breath in to turn your hands so your palms face down.
- Then as you slowly exhale lower your hands back down on level with you navel.
- Hold the breath out to turn your hands back up to face you.
- Continue for 10 breaths trying to keep the movement of your hands in time with your breath
- Perhaps you can visualise filling your lungs with healing, vibrant energy as you inhale and as you exhale imagine you are directing that energy through body and mind.

### Giving and Receiving Breaths

This also needs to be worked from sitting due to the arm movements. So check your sitting position, try and have eyes closed and breathe through the nose if you can.

- Bring your arms alongside your body and check shoulders are relaxed as you lift through your spine.
- As you inhale slowly raise your arms out and up to the side of you until your palms meet above your head.
- As you exhale bring your hands down in front of you into Prayer Mudra in front of your heart.
- As you inhale slowly raise your arms back up nice and straight so your hands are above your head.
- Then as you exhale turn your hands so the backs of them meet and slowly lower your arms out and down alongside you.
- Continue for 10 breaths trying to keep the movement of the arms in time with the breath.
- As you inhale raising your arms up imagine you are drawing in lots of healing energy - Prana, from the universe. Then as you exhale bringing your hands in to Prayer Mudra, imagine you are directing that healing energy down in to your entire being.
- Now as you inhale raising your hands up above your head gather any loving energy that you have to offer, and as you exhale lowering your arms imagine you send that loving energy back out in to the universe.

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Main Resting Asanas

The following asanas are used a lot when either breathing, working relaxation or resting in between the main postures and routines. They are just as important as the main postures and have their own special benefits. They are quite easy poses so they are good ones to learn first and learn to hold in preparation for the more challenging ones. Learn these off by heart and you will find the other postures easier to learn and hold as you progress with your yoga practice.

### Mountain Pose - Tadasana

#### **Benefits**

This pose helps with correcting your overall posture. It helps to prevent backache as it strengthens the back and abdominal muscles as well as the legs and feet. It helps with grounding (connecting to the earth), helps lift depression improving confidence and increases energy levels.

This pose is the foundation for most standing asanas - postures and is therefore worked quite a lot.

#### **To work the pose**

- Come to stand nice and tall with your feet hip width apart.
- Check that your body weight is even on both feet and then plant your feet firmly in to the floor.
- Lift up through your legs (checking that you're not locking your knees).
- Draw your navel to spine to support your back and check your hips are level and facing forwards.
- Lift up through your spine, lifting from your waist and up through your rib cage.
- Expand your chest and check your shoulders are low and wide with your arms down alongside your body but a little way away from it.
- Draw your chin in a fraction and lift through the crown of your head - imagining that you are growing taller.
- Breathe deeply here as you stand in Tadasana - Mountain Pose.
- If you can close your eyes and feel yourself in the pose - grounded and strong, connected to the earth, taking up space with a right to be here.

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Staff Pose - Dandasana

#### **Benefits**

This pose helps to improve your sitting posture. It helps to strengthen the back and stretches the hamstrings, feet and toes.

This pose is the foundation for most sitting asanas - postures and is again practised quite a lot.

#### **To work the pose**

- Stretch your legs out and walk your sit bones back a pace or two drawing your toes to face. Check your ankles are together and the backs of your heels are still resting on the floor. However as you progress with your pregnancy you may find it more comfortable to have your legs apart a little.
- Have your arms down alongside your body with your palms pushed in to the floor. If you have long arms then walk them back a pace or two but check you are not leaning back on them.
- Lift up through your spine and up through the crown of your head.
- Draw your chin in a fraction and check your shoulders are low and wide.
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply as you work the stretch up through your body.
- Feel the stretch down the backs of your feet, up through the backs of your legs, up through your spine, through the crown of your head, across your shoulders and down through your arms and hands.

### Child's Pose - Balasana

#### **Benefits**

This pose gives the spine a gentle stretch and massages the abdominal organs helping with digestive complaints. It is used to ease the back out and rest in after a lot of asanas - postures.

#### **To work the pose**

- From kneeling - Rajasana. Check your bottom is resting on your heels and your navel is drawn back towards your spine.
- Have your knees wide apart then with a flat back stretch your chest forwards allowing it to sink in to the gap between your legs. Check your bottom is still touching your heels.
- Bring the top of your head to the floor with your chin tucked in.
- Allow your arms to rest alongside your body with your palms up. Check your shoulders are low and wide and elbows are towards the floor.
- Breathe deeply as you sink in to the pose feeling the stretch up and across your back.
- To come out lift your head and come up slowly with a flat back keeping your bottom on your heels.

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Relaxation Pose - Baby Krishna

#### **Benefits**

This pose is excellent for resting in or working relaxation in when over 20 weeks pregnant. It is advised that pregnant ladies do not lay flat on their backs for more than a couple of minutes after the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. The reason for this is that it can make blood flow more difficult and possibly decrease blood flow to the uterus. This is known as Vena cava syndrome and can cause dizziness and nausea where pressure is put on the vena cava vein.

#### **To work the pose**

- Come to lie on your left side with a pillow or cushion under your head.
- Bend your right leg and rest your right knee on either a pillow or folded blanket.
- Now place a blanket or cushion under your right ankle and foot so your right leg is totally supported at an equal level.
- You may find you want a blanket or cushion just under your left hip to support your bump as you get bigger.

If you find laying on your left side uncomfortable then rest on the right.....it is suggested to lay on the left side to give the baby more room to rest and settle in to, as there is more space on the left side of the body than the right.

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Neck & Shoulder Routine (10 mins)

#### **Benefits**

These exercises are very good at easing out tension and stiffness from the neck and shoulders. If practised daily they can help to ease and even prevent headaches as well as neck and shoulder pain. They are particularly good for those who suffer with arthritic necks and/or shoulders and those who are hunched over a desk all day.

#### **To Begin**

Check you are sitting comfortably and that you are lifting through your spine with your shoulders low and wide. Remember to breathe deeply throughout your practise and move slowly, focusing on releasing tension and tiredness from your neck and shoulders.

#### **Neck Exercises**

##### **Stage 1 - Rotation**

- Draw your chin in a fraction so you feel the back of your neck straighten and slowly and smoothly turn your face towards the right, so your chin is directly over your right shoulder. Then carefully bring your head back to centre. Now slowly and smoothly turn your face to the left so your chin is over your left shoulder and then carefully bring your head back to centre.
- Repeat twice more focusing on the stretch the second time and then holding the pose as you breathe deeply softening in to the stretch on the third time.

##### **Stage 2 - Lateral Stretch**

- Keeping your shoulders low and wide, slowly drop your right ear to right shoulder and then bring your head back to centre. Now drop your left ear to left shoulder and back to centre.
- Repeat twice more feeling and focusing on the stretch the second time and then holding the pose as you breathe deeply, softening in to the stretch on the third time.

##### **Stage 3 - Extension**

- Carefully drop your head back towards your back as far as you can. Feel the stretch in your throat and the massage of the back of the neck. If this is too much for you and hurts or makes you cough, then work the following neck rolls with your chin on chest.
- Roll your head just a little way about half an inch to the right and then back to centre. Now roll your head the same amount to the left and return to centre.
- Repeat twice more. Keep dropping back and feel the squeeze at the back of the neck as you breathe deeply but do not hold.
- When finished carefully lift your head back up to centre and take a deep breath.

##### **Stage 4 - Flexion**

- Check you are lifting through your spine and keeping your spine straight slowly lower your chin to chest, so you are just moving your neck, and breathe into the stretch across the back of your neck.
- Now if you can interlace your fingers and stretch your arms forward and up and rest your palms on the back of your head and allow the weight of your hands to draw your chin further down onto chest as you breathe deeply. .
- With your hands behind your head try and draw your elbows in so they come around your head and feel that extra weight draw your chin further down. Check you are still lifting through your spine and breathe deeply as you soften and loosen in to the stretch. .

- Now release your elbows from around your head but keep your hands on the back of your head as you now slowly lift your head back to centre. Then as you exhale slowly lower your arms back down alongside your body.

## **Shoulder Routine**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Round - Single Lifts**

- Check you are sitting comfortably, lifting through your spine, shoulders low and wide, arms relaxed and breathing deeply.
- Now as you inhale raise your right shoulder to your right ear - make sure you keep your head and neck still and just work the shoulder. Then as you exhale slowly lower your right shoulder back down. Now repeat on the left side....so inhaling raise left shoulder to left ear and then exhaling lower your left shoulder down.
- So inhaling raising your right shoulder to right ear - checking your arm is floppy and relaxed and exhaling lowering your right shoulder down. Now repeat with your left shoulder.....inhaling to lift & exhaling to lower.
- So inhaling raising your right shoulder to right ear and really squeeze there gathering any tension and as you exhale slowly lower your right shoulder down allowing any tension to drain down through your arm, through your hand and way down in to the earth. Now repeat with your left shoulder again really gathering any tension there as you inhale and then letting it go as you exhale.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Round - Double lifts**

- As you inhale raise both shoulders up to both ears and exhaling lowering both shoulders down.
- So inhaling raising both shoulders up and in checking arms are floppy and relaxed and exhaling lowering both shoulders down.
- Last time...so inhaling raising both shoulders up and in really squeezing there gathering any last remaining tension and exhaling slowly lowering your shoulders down feeling any tension just drain down through your arms, through your hands and down in to the earth.
- Now allow your hands to rest gently back in your lap and take a few deep breaths feeling all the good work that's gone on in your head, neck and shoulders.

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### The Cat Routine - Marjariasana

#### **Benefits**

An excellent warm up routine helping to stretch and strengthen the back and spine. It is very good for relieving back ache, menstrual disorders and improving circulation and digestion. It also helps to strengthen the muscles in the abdomen, legs, waist, arms and hands.

#### **To Begin**

Come on to all fours and check that your knees are hip width apart and directly below your hips. Then check that your hands are pushed firmly in to the floor and that your hands are shoulder width apart and directly below your shoulders. Check you are breathing deeply and remember to move slowly and smoothly as you focus on stretching out your back and spine.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Movement**

Arch your spine up towards the ceiling drawing your stomach muscles in and your chin in. Then bring your spine back to a neutral position - so nice and flat, looking to the floor in front of you or slightly ahead.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Movement**

Arch your spine up again drawing stomach muscles in and chin in and bring your right knee in and up to touch your nose. Slowly lower your knee back down to the floor. Now bring your spine back to neutral again. Repeat again working the left knee.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Movement**

Arch your spine up towards the ceiling drawing stomach muscles in and chin in and bring your right knee in to touch your nose or maybe even your forehead. Now stretch your right leg out behind you and push away the heel, checking it's in line with your spine. Then bring your head back to centre looking up feeling the work going on in your back. Then slowly lower your right leg down bringing right knee to floor.

Repeat again working the left knee and leg.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Slowly turn your face towards the right so you're looking round over your right shoulder. You should feel the squeeze of your right waist muscles and the stretch of the left. Slowly return to centre.

Repeat on the left side.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Keeping your right leg bent slowly raise it up to right side of you, trying to keep right ankle, knee and hip in line (like it's resting on an imaginary shelf). Remember to keep breathing deeply. Then slowly lower your right knee back down.

Repeat with the left leg.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Arch your spine up towards the ceiling drawing stomach muscles in and chin in and bring your right knee in to touch your nose or maybe even your forehead. Now stretch your right leg out behind you and push away the heel, checking it's in line with your spine. Then bring your head back to centre looking up feeling the work going on in your back. Then slowly lower your right leg down bringing right knee to floor. Repeat again working the left knee and leg.

## Dog Pose - Swanasana

### **Benefits**

This pose stretches the whole of the back of the body and strengthens hands, wrists, shoulders, neck, hips, legs and feet. It is a semi - inverted pose and helps rest the heart and nourishes the brain, scalp and facial tissues with extra blood. This pose is said to help remove fatigue and rejuvenate body and mind. If you feel dizzy or too much pressure in the head then ease out immediately and rest in swan. It is also not advised to hold this for too long when pregnant either.

### **Coming into the pose**

From all fours, spread your fingers wide pressing your hands firmly in to the floor. Tuck under your chin and curl your toes under. Then as you inhale push up and back straightening your legs.

### **Holding the pose**

Breathe deeply as you work on trying to draw your heels towards the floor and your face and chest towards your legs. Don't walk hands or feet in keep them where they are. Feel the stretch in the back of your body from your feet, up your legs, down your back, to your head and down through your arms and hands. Keep breathing deeply as you try and soften in to the stretch.

### **Coming out of the pose**

As you exhale bring your knees back to the floor keeping them wide apart. Sit your bottom on your heels, stretch your chest forwards into the gap between your legs, bringing your forehead to the floor. Then allow your arms to rest alongside your body with your palms up. Check shoulders are low and wide and elbows are towards the floor. Breathe deeply as you rest in **Child's Pose - Balasana**.

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### The Spirit Salute

#### **Benefits**

This gentle warm up routine works on stretching the whole of the body as it manipulates the spine in all the four ways possible. It consists of a series of forward bends, backward bends, side stretches and twists. It works on strengthening and stretching both the lower and upper body and is suitable for all. If worked with the correct breathing it also becomes a beautiful moving meditation.

#### **To Begin**

Come to stand in Tadasana - Mountain Pose with your feet hip width apart breathing deeply, feeling your connection to the earth.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Bring your hands together in front of your heart in Prayer Mudra. Check your shoulders and elbows are low and wide.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Movement**

Inhaling: Stretch your arms forward at shoulder height, pushing your palms away.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Cup your hands and come down to squatting, sinking your hips trying to have your heels on the floor. Bring your arms between your legs with the back of your hands resting on the floor. Check your spine is straight and shoulders low and wide as you look to floor in front of you.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Inhaling: Slowly stand back up raising your arms up above your head with your palms facing the ceiling. Check your arms are straight and close to your ears and then look up to the backs of your hands.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Bring your head back to centre, interlace your thumbs, lift up through the spine and stretch up and over to the right working a side bend. Check your left hip and shoulder are back with your arms nice and straight.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Inhaling: Come back up and stretch up through your spine and arms with your thumbs still interlaced.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Repeat Movement 5 but on the left side.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Inhaling: Repeat Movement 6 but on the left side.

#### **9<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Drop your head back a little way and separate your hands stretching your arms out and down to each side bringing your hands together in front of your body.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Inhaling: Bring your hands up through the centre line of your body, raising your arms high above your head. Make strong fists with your hands and check your arms are nice and straight and alongside your ears.

### **11<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Twist round to the right and come forward and down on the right side drawing your face and chest in trying to get your fists to floor.

### **12<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Inhaling: Staying to the right and keeping your arms alongside your ears, slowly come back up and twist back to face forwards.

### **13<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Repeat Movement 11 but on the left side.

### **14<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Inhaling: Repeat Movement 12 but on the left side.

### **15<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Bring your palms together and down through the centre line of your body, turning them at your heart. Bend your knees as you come forward and down with a flat back. Draw your face and chest in and cross your left wrist over your right to represent your Lotus Flower (your spirit).

### **16<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Inhaling: Keeping your arms alongside your ears stretch forwards as you come up with a flat back. Stand with your arms high above your head looking up to your wrists (your Lotus Flower), stretching your eyes.

### **17<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Bring your wrists (your Lotus Flower) to your forehead (your Mind Centre)

### **18<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Inhaling: Bring your hands together and back down in front of your heart in Prayer Mudra

### **19<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Exhaling: Cup your hand and stretch your arms forwards and down & return to Tadasana - Mountain Pose breathing deeply.

### **Note:**

Try and work 5 rounds in total unless that's too much for you in which case work as many as you feel able to.

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Moon Salutations – Chandra Namaskara

#### **Benefits**

This is a female energy routine that works the spine in all 4 directions making it a very balanced routine. This routine is particularly good for strengthening and stretching the hips and knees & for toning the waist. Due to its series of twists and turns it also works on balance and co-ordination.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Movement**

From Rajasana (Kneeling) – bring your hands together in front of your heart in to Prayer Mudra. Kneel up and step your right foot forwards as far as you can, sinking your hips.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Movement**

Keeping palms together, stretch your arms forward to shoulder height and then raise your arms up alongside your ears, palms above your head, arms nice and straight.

#### **3rd Movement**

Lower your arms back down to shoulder height, opening your arms wide apart.

#### **4th Movement**

Now twist round to the left looking over your left shoulder and back to centre. Then twist round to the right looking over your right shoulder and back to centre.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Now raise your right arm up alongside your right ear and keeping your arm straight and in contact with your ear, stretch up and over to the left trying to get your left palm to the floor. Slowly come back up and lower your right arm back down to shoulder height so both arms are stretched wide apart. Then repeat on the left side, so bringing left arm to left ear and stretching up and over to the right – working Half Moon Pose.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Stretch your right arm in front of you, left arm behind and lunge forward, resting your chest on thigh.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Bring both hands to the floor and right knee to floor, so you are on all fours ready for a cat stretch. Arch your spine up towards the ceiling, drawing your chin and stomach muscles in. Then bring your spine to a neutral position looking straight ahead.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Tuck under your chin and curl under the toes of the right foot and push up and back on the right foot raising your left leg high up behind - working Alternate Leg Dog Pose. Bring your left leg down and raise your right leg up drawing your face and chest in to your leg. Then bring your right leg back down alongside your left.

#### **9<sup>th</sup> Movement**

Bring your knees to the floor and have them wide apart. Sit your bottom on your heels, stretch your chest forwards to rest in the gap between your legs and bring your head to the floor with your arms stretched out in front of you – working Swan Pose.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Movement**

From Swan push up and back in to Kneeling – Rajasana and breathe deeply. The when ready repeat on the left side, so step the left foot forward etc.

### **Note**

Work this routine 3 times on each side

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Dolphin Pose (Upper Body Strengthening)

#### **Benefits**

This exercise is brilliant for toning and strengthening the arms, shoulders and chest muscles. It is used as a preparation for holding asanas such as headstand which require lots of upper body strength, but is good to practice on its own too.

#### **Half Dolphin**

- From Childs' pose and lift your head & bring your right forearm to the floor in front of your knees & the left forearm in front of the right.
- Slide your arms as far away as possible & come up on to your knees.
- Release your hands and interlace your fingers so you make a nice v shape with your forearms.
- As you exhale bring your chin to the floor in front of your hands and as you inhale lift back up (repeat 5 times).
- Come back in to Childs' pose & rest.

### Single Leg Raises (Lower Body Strengthening)

#### **Benefits**

These exercises are excellent for strengthening and toning the legs, abdominal, waist and back muscles. The joints of the legs are also strengthened and made more flexible and they help to relieve fluid in the legs easing congestion there. These exercises are used in preparation for lots of different asanas but are great to work in their own right due to their benefits. Do not work if over 20 weeks pregnant you may like to work the side leg raises instead (*see worksheet on how to practise* )

#### **Single Leg Raises**

##### **To Begin**

Come to lie on the floor on your back with legs straight and toes to face. Place your hands underneath your buttocks, palms down, to support your back – you may even like to place a cushion here. Check back and spine is molded in to the floor with your chin in. Now bend your left leg to help support you as you work the right leg first.

##### **Stage 1 - Toe Pointing**

- Inhale & as you exhale raise your right leg up slowly keeping toes to face & then rest with your right leg at a right angle to the floor breathing deeply.
- Point your toes to the ceiling and back to your face (repeat 3 times)
- With toes to face, exhale slowly lowering your right leg back down to the floor.
- Repeat with the left leg remembering to have the right leg bent this time.

### **Stage 2 – Ankle Rotation**

- Inhale & as you exhale raise your right leg up slowly keeping toes to face & then rest with your right leg at a right angle to the floor breathing deeply.
- Relax your right foot and keeping right leg still, make slow circles with just your foot & ankle in one direction.
- Then make the circles in the other direction focusing on the good work going on in your foot & leg.
- Draw toes back to face & exhaling slowly lower your right leg back to the floor
- Repeat with the left leg.

### **Stage 3 – Leg Stretch**

- Inhale & as you exhale raise your right leg up slowly keeping toes to face & then rest with your right leg at a right angle to the floor breathing deeply.
- Release your hands and clasp them round the back of your right knee, calf or ankle. Where ever feels comfortable but creates a stretch. Try and keep shoulders and head on the floor at this stage.
- Using the breath, as you exhale slowly draw your right leg down towards your face & keep gently drawing it down further and further on each exhalation.
- Straighten your right leg, drawing toes to face & exhaling slowly lower your leg back to the floor.
- Repeat with the left leg.

**Note: Always work with your supporting leg bent**

## Yoga, Spirit & Strength - Pregnancy Worksheets

### Yoga Nidra - Relaxation (15 - 20 mins)

#### **Benefits**

This is worked at the end of a class but is ideal to practise on it's own if you ever feel stressed or tired and feel the need to relax. It's ideal to practise before going off to sleep especially if you find it hard to get off to sleep at night. It helps to relax the body all over and calm the mind and in turn the emotions. It helps to reduce headaches, fatigue, anxiety and nervousness. It also helps to alleviate constipation, indigestion, asthma and to lower blood pressure as well as aiding with mental concentration.

It's best to practise in a warm, calm environment where you will not be disturbed. It's best to practise with shoes off and to have a jumper or blanket nearby as your body temperature tends to drop as it relaxes.

#### **To Begin**

Come down to lie on the floor in Relaxation pose - Baby Krishna (*see sheet on how to work properly*)

#### **Stretching and Tensing**

Inhaling push away your heels and spread your toes.....Exhaling release and relax.

Inhaling lift your hips & squeeze your buttocks.....Exhaling release and relax.

Inhaling push the small of your back to the floor or chair... Exhaling release and relax

Inhaling push your chest upwards/outwards.....Exhaling release and relax

Inhaling make fists, tense your arms and then spread your fingers wide.... ..

Exhaling release and relax

Inhaling shrug your shoulders up and in.....Exhaling release and relax

Inhaling draw your chin down to your throat.....Exhaling release and relax

Inhaling screw all your face muscles towards your nose..... Exhaling

stretch your face wide, so stretching your eyes and mouth and release and relax.

#### **Progressive Relaxation**

Take three deep breaths and as you do visualize or feel any tension draining away with each exhalation.

Feel your body now beginning to..... Relax. Feel it softening and loosening with each deep breath you take.

Now feel your body becoming heavier and heavier and allow your body to surrender to the floor - to the earth ,knowing you are safe and secure.

Now bring your awareness to your feet and repeat silently in your mind as follows.....

I relax my feet.....I relax my feet.....My feet are relaxing, relaxing.  
I relax my legs.....I relax my legs.....My legs are relaxing, relaxing.  
I relax my pelvis.....I relax my pelvis.....My pelvis is relaxing, relaxing  
I relax my back.....I relax my back.....My back is softening, loosening,  
relaxing.

I relax my chest.....I relax my chest.....My chest is relaxing, relaxing.  
I relax my hands.....I relax my hands.....My hands are relaxing, relaxing.  
I relax my arms..... ..I relax my arms.....My arms are relaxing, relaxing.  
I relax my shoulders... I relax my shoulders....My shoulders are softening, loosening,  
relaxing.

I relax my neck.....I relax my neck.....My neck is relaxing, relaxing.  
I relax my face.....I relax my face.....My face is relaxing, relaxing.  
I relax my head.....I relax my head.....My head is relaxing, relaxing.

Now take three more deep breaths and as you exhale feel yourself relaxing more and more.

Now rest your mind for a while in a beautiful scene - real or imaginary. Somewhere where you feel at happy and content and at peace with yourself and the world.

Now take 3 more deep breaths as you begin to let go of your beautiful scene. Then slowly become aware of your body lying on the floor and slowly begin to wriggle fingers and toes. Then when you feel ready have a good stretch and open your eyes and come back up in to a comfortable meditation pose. Then pause for thought as you draw your awareness inwards one more time scanning body and mind, taking note of your energy.